

quainted with vice from their infancy. The homes, so called, are so uncomfortable that the children are driven to the street and the men to the saloon. Poverty drives many of the men to crime and the girls to a life of shame. When Christians awaken to their duty, these plague spots will be transformed to decent habitations, and the poor will have a fair chance to live right.

Our efforts to do men good are one means of preaching Christ. They are an object lesson in the love of God. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:16. The fact that many who are benefited in a temporal way by these reforms fail to accept Christ is no argument against our taking part in such work. Most of those who hear the gospel preached reject it, yet God's servants are commanded to preach to them, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." Ezek. 3:11. We are commanded to do good to all men, and to preach to all men, and leave the results to God. Whether it be true or not that "it can make no difference to God whether a man is lost a prohibitionist or a drunkard, a moralist or a thief," it does make a difference whether his people obey his commands or not.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF BOOKS

EMILY BEATRICE GNAGEY

In a collection of writings translated from the French there is this sweet and simple story of a cultured soul. He was about to take his leave into the country to spend there the sultry summer months and, in response to an expression of surprise at his having made such limited preparations for his visit, said: "Give me a nook in some quiet dell and besides only God and a friend or a book."

"A friend or a book!" That is a phrase of fine meaning. It bears more than ordinary significance for a friend and a book may in a very large sense supplant one another. A good book is virtually a friend. It is "the precious life-blood of a master spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." Emerson, in his beautiful essay on Friendship, says that the two elements in the composition of friendship are truth and tenderness. These elements are essentially found in books. They are friends tender and true, the very friends we need, "the never-failing friends with whom we converse day by day."

If we are weary or discouraged or sorrowful, we need but go apart into the library with some poet who saw "the earth crammed with heaven and every common bush afire with God;" some serene spirit who read a deeper meaning in the commonplace than we were wont to grant; some optimist into whose soul the light of the eternal, triumphant goodness shined; some man of vision who gazed into the sinking sun and beheld the New Jerusalem coming down out of

Heaven. Blessed books! how they comfort, counsel and chide.

Only when we have thus communed with the wise and the good can we enter into the deep feeling that gave voice to these words: "If I were blind yet should I wish to be surrounded by books. I could at least feel them." Such a spirit should characterize every individual. Our life should be so dependent upon books, our devotion to them be so firm, and our regard for them so sensitive, that we would love the very books themselves as they come from the publishers. And every scar of time and every stain of service ought only to make them dearer.

Have you ever reflected, and you surely have if the love of books is kindled in your heart, that the one Ideal Friend left in the world thru his closest followers the very sweetness of his life treasured up in the shape of a book? Was it not given us for a friend? Verily so; its friendship has been tried by the camp fires of the battle ground and in the homes of peace, in the hour of death and in the times of joy and happiness; and it has never failed. If the preciousness of the Bible has never come to you in just this way, remember hereafter when you pore over its pure pages, whenever your eyes fall upon its golden edges bespeaking the gold within, that perhaps it is no irreverent conceit to believe that, as all earth is sacred because Jesus trod the blue hills of Gallilee and the green fields of Judea, so every book worthy of the printer's care is sacred because the gospel story is likewise preserved.

Edward Everett Hale, when he set down a few rules for ideal living, gave among others, this: "Be every day in communion with your superior." Very often we must resort to books for this communion; for "here genius lives enshrined; here reign in solemn majesty the monarchs of the mind." To love books and to be often with them is to have friendship with the loftiest spirits, to live in a higher and better world.

It is a priceless heritage which to be robbed of, is to lose lasting good. "Lasting good," let us repeat. This life is too short for friends. When you have conceived a rare affection for a book, when you have fallen in love with one, you have begun a friendship that shall be perfected in the immortal hereafter.

THE COVERING IN THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

An Exposition of I Cor. 11

J. L. GILLIN

There are three things necessary to bear in mind in interpreting any passage of scripture in order not to be led away into all sorts of errors. Peter gave utterance to a profound principle of Bible interpretation when he said, "No prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation." II Pet. 1:20.

1. The first thing to inquire is, the circumstances as to custom, habits, thoughts, previous history and tendencies of those for whom it was primarily intended. Without

an understanding of the people and times for whom a portion of scripture was primarily intended we can make the words mean almost anything.

2. The second question to settle is, What was the first and immediate purpose of the author in writing a certain thing to a certain church. Not that the primary intention is the only purpose a scripture may properly serve, but that we shall not be able to know what lesson we may draw from it unless we know the primary purpose with which it was written.

3. The third thing to settle in our minds is, Does this scripture have a *general* or a *special and limited* application? In other words, Is a certain command for all times and all places, or was it for a special time, to meet a special need?

For example, the case of Christ's command to the blind man in John 9. to go to the pool of Siloam and wash,—is it a *general* or *special* command? Was it intended for all times and all men, or for the particular time there described and for that one case? Of course, we can easily see it was the latter.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." II Tim. 3:16 And so that about the blind man is, but it does not teach every one, or even every blind man to go to the pool of Siloam and wash; it teaches obedience and faith, however. Hence it is "profitable for teaching."

With these principles in mind let us examine this eleventh chapter of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

1. Where was the church? At Corinth in Greece. Hence, the people were largely Greeks. (Also see chapter 12:2.) Were the surroundings of the people different from those of other people, e. g., the Jews? Yes. The Greeks had many national and local customs different from those of most other peoples. (a) Women among the Greeks held a very low position. She was held in low respect by Greeks. Myers says, "Altho there are in Greek literature some exquisitely beautiful portraiture of ideal womanhood, still the general tone of the literature betrays a deep contempt for women, which Symonds regards as 'the greatest social blot upon the brilliant but imperfect civilization of the Greeks.'" The poets are particularly sarcastic: Simonides winds up a bitter invective against women in general, in which he compares different classes of them to various despicable animals, by saying, "Zeus made this supreme evil—women: even tho they seem to be of good, when one has got one, she becomes a plague!" And another poet (Hippohox) says, "A woman gives two days of happiness to a man—her bridal and her burial!" Plato does not entertain a high opinion of the sex, while Thucydides quotes with seeming approval the Greek proverb: "That woman is best who is least spoken of among men, whether for good or evil."